

Members of the Fort Monroe Motorcycle Association pose for a picture after a meeting on Wednesday. Members are (left-right): David Speigner, Mike Hawkins, Doug Campbell, Jay Vega, Sgt. 1st Class Doris Wagner, Jeffrey Colimon, Pat Wiggins and Jeff Payne. Association member Maj. Merle Walker is not pictured.

New Monroe program urges motorcycle safety

BY E. DAVID VIDA
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Through comraderie, mentorship and occasional excursions on the open road, a new program here plans to build biker safety for years to come.

The Fort Monroe Motorcycle Association began meeting earlier this month. Group leaders are looking for members who are interested in improving their riding skills, as well as seasoned riders willing to mentor those who are just getting the feel for their bikes and the road.

Due to a summertime string of fatal accidents involving Soldiers, the emphasis of motorcycle safety has become a top priority across the Army. In recent months, two installation motorcycle safety rides drew sizeable crowds from not only the Monroe community, but also other service branches and military installations throughout Hampton Roads.

"We want to keep that momentum going," said David Speigner, who is spearheading the group. "Our purpose is to support the Fort Monroe community by establishing and maintaining a spirit of comraderie among riders. We're going to stress rider education and skills development to reduce the potential of motorcycle accidents."

The FMMA is open to all military, civilian and contract employees on the installation, as well as Department of Defense retirees and other service members residing in the area.

Though their meeting schedule is considered "tentative" at the moment, the FMMA plans to hold monthly meetings once they get set-

tled into a regular routine. For now, their meetings will be held in the classroom adjacent to the Fitside Perk at the Fort Monroe Fitness Center during the lunch hour, Speigner noted.

Along with their regular meetings, the group is planning social events and rides of varying distances. Speigner would like the group to take a trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains if they can work out the logistics. He will also push for barbecue socials.

"We want to make it fun as well as educational," he said. "We want to build friendships and community relations."

For those who currently ride motorcycles, or are interested in owning one, these meetings will provide the necessary information and feedback that could possibly prevent a future incident resulting in damage, injury or death.

Speigner said some of the topics the group will focus on during their meetings include: accident avoidance measures, proper motorcycle maintenance and recommended safety equipment.

Occasionally, they will invite outside motorcycle safety experts to their meetings to share insights and answer any questions the members may have.

"We want to provide the needed resources to motorcyclists and conduct our organization according to the standards, traditions and customs of the U.S. Army," Speigner concluded.

For more information about the association or future events, current and potential members can contact Speigner at 788-4886.

